Concessional travel facilities to the staff of Air India

918. SHRI S. MADHAVAN : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state ;

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of Air-India Staff families were stranded recently in Singapore Airport for want of seats in Air-India flights for their return journey ;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof ; and

(c) the steps taken to regulate the concessional travel facilities to the staff to avoid over-crowding ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD) : (a) and (b) A number of Air India employees and members of their family were stranded at Singapore airport in May, 1993. These employees were having free tickets, which were valid for travel on "space available" basis. Due to spurt of demand at Singapore from fare paying passengers, these employees, who held free tickets could not be accommodated and had to stay at Singapore airport.

(c) As a result of this incident, Air India has taken steps to close flights to Singapore for travel by Staff, prior to commencement of the peak season.

Foreign investment in Indian Aviation companies

919. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have cleared the proposal for foreign equity investment in Indian Aviation Companies upto a maximum of 40 percent ;

(b) whether Government have considered the security implications of such foreign involvement in Indian aviation ;

(c) whether Government are aware that such investment goes against the Air Corporations Act ; and

(d) if so, what steps Government intend to take to resolve this anomalous situation and what are the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD) : (a) An investment proposal proposting 40% foreign equity participation, in the holding company owning M/s Jet Airways, a private Air Taxi operator, has been approved by the Government.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) Since Air Taxi operators are permitted only to provide non-scheduled and/or chartered services, the investment approval given by the Government does not violate the provisions of the Air Corporations Act, 1953.

World Bank Study on losses of Indian Airlines

920. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA : SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR :

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether the World Bank has pointed out various reasons for the growing accumulated losses of the Indian Airlines including excess staffing and competition from private air services ;

(b) if so, what were the precise reasons pointed out by the World Bank ; and

(c) what steps are being taken to take Indian Airlines out of the red ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD) : (a) and (b) No such report has been received.

(c) To reduce losses, the following steps have been taken by Indian Airlines :

(i) Improvement in customer services ; both on ground and on board the aircraft.